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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Wins in political primaries p2

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HOW TO
Create a character bookmark p25

June 5, 2026 • Vol. 7, Issue 320 • $5.99

Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

2026 Summer of Reading

50 BOOKS KIDS LOVE MOST

Dive into summer with our list of exciting reads! p12

FACT FILE
In the 1894 midterm elections, during President Grover Cleveland's second term, Democrats lost more than 100 seats in Congress.

Economic outlook

One factor in the midterms is how people feel about their own financial situation and the economy overall. A monthly poll conducted by the University of Michigan found that these views fell for the third straight month and hit an all-time low in May, when people said their personal finances worsened by 13%.

US midterm elections taking shape

As the nation gears up for midterm elections in November, primary elections are taking place in 44 states. These will determine which candidates will be on the ballot this fall and influence which political party, Democrats or Republicans, will have more seats and power in Congress (branch of government that makes laws).

What are the midterms?

Midterms are the elections held halfway through a President's four-year term. The President and Vice President are not up for election, but many other important positions are. At the national level, these include all 435 seats in the House of Representatives (one half of Congress), where members serve two-year terms. Members of the Senate (other half of Congress) serve six-year terms that start at different times, so about a third of them are up for election. At the state level, 39 governors (top state leaders) will be elected. Numerous other offices at the state and local levels will also be on the ballot.

What are primary elections?

Before the midterms are held, primaries take place. In these elections, candidates from the same political party compete against one another to see who will represent their party on the ballot in the general election. In many states, only voters who are registered with a specific party can vote in that party's primaries. In other states, primary voting is not restricted by party.

Why are these elections important?

In midterm elections, parties try to gain or keep control of Congress for the remainder of a President's term. The party with more seats has greater authority and a better chance of passing legislation. Right now, the balance of power in Congress is close. In the House, Republicans have 217 seats, Democrats have 212, Independents have one, and five are empty. In the Senate, there are 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats, and two Independents. Midterms are also considered a time for voters to express their approval or disapproval of the current President. Historically, a President's political party loses seats in Congress at the two-year mark. This year, voters have expressed dissatisfaction with food and housing costs, gas prices, and the war in Iran.

What has happened in the primaries?

President Donald Trump's preferred candidates have won in high-profile Republican primaries so far. These include elections in Indiana on May 5, Louisiana on May 16, and Kentucky on May 19. In Texas, Republican candidates competing to run for the US Senate spent nearly $130 million on their campaigns, breaking spending records. The primary between John Cornyn, a senator for almost 24 years, and Ken Paxton, the state's former attorney general, was too close to call on March 3. That led to a runoff on May 26, which Paxton won after an endorsement from Trump. In Democratic primaries, former Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms won the nomination for the Georgia governor's race. In Illinois, Juliana Stratton won the primary on March 17 to replace Senator Dick Durbin, who has served since 1996. She will face Republican Don Tracy in November.

What else will affect results?

A big factor in this year's elections is redistricting, which is when states adjust their voting maps to account for changes in where people live and to ensure that all citizens are fairly represented. The process can be used to boost support for a specific political party, particularly in the House. Redistricting efforts are underway in several Republican-led states, including Texas, Florida, and Ohio, and in Democrat-led California. Political experts said current efforts could give Republicans up to 16 House seats and Democrats up to six.

What will happen next?

Primaries will continue into September, and runoff elections will take place in Georgia, Alabama, and other states. Once primary elections are over, ballots will be set for the general election, which will take place on November 3. Early and mail-in voting will begin before that date in many areas.

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS; MONTREAL VICTOIRE; JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKEIT; ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

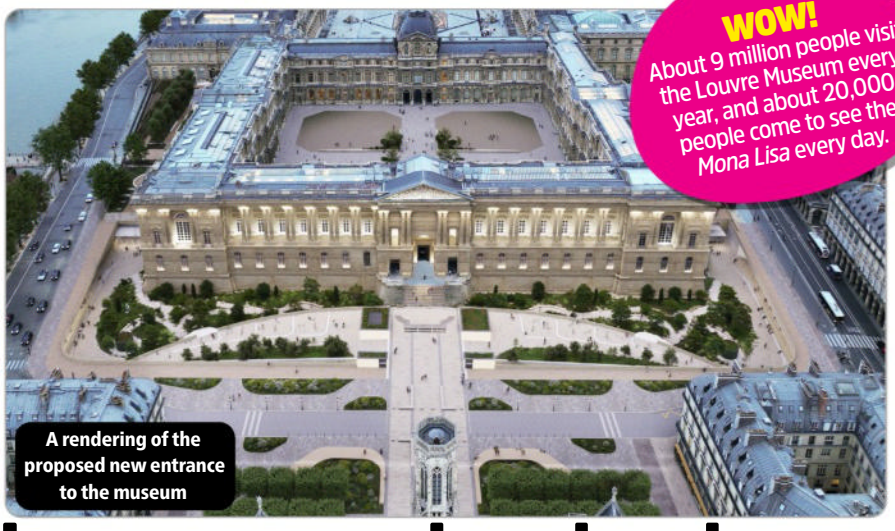
Big milestone for global energy

For the first time, more electricity was generated in a single month using wind and solar power than gas, according to a new report. In April 2026, these forms of renewable energy generated 22% of global electricity, compared with 20% by gas. The report, published by Ember, a nonprofit that focuses on energy, used data from 36 countries and estimates from others.

Renewable energy comes from natural resources and is nearly unlimited because it's replenished by nature. Fossil fuels like gas, coal, and oil are not unlimited and cause pollution when used to create electricity. Countries that had an increase in renewable energy output included the UK (35% increase), Chile (24%), and the US (8%).

The report noted that April is a good month for renewable energy because spring brings more sunlight and wind to many nations. Ember analysts also said they believe the increase in electricity generated by renewable sources is part of a larger trend rather than a response to the current fuel crisis created by the ongoing war in Iran.

Wind turbines generate power.



A rendering of the proposed new entrance to the museum

WOW! About 9 million people visit the Louvre Museum every year, and about 20,000 people come to see the *Mona Lisa* every day.

Louvre expansion plan chosen

Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, announced on May 18 that a design for an expansion of the Louvre Museum in Paris had been chosen. The plan will ease crowding and allow direct access to the museum's most iconic work, the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci.

The Louvre is the world's most visited art museum. Originally a residence for French royalty, the expansive structure was built over hundreds of years, starting in 1546, and became a museum in 1793. This will be its first major expansion since 1989, when a glass pyramid was added as its main entrance. Officials said the new design will allow for 3 million more visitors each year.

The expansion will include a separate exhibition space and a dedicated entrance for the *Mona Lisa*, which draws heavy crowds and long lines. The proposed redesign will also include an additional entrance to the museum, with a grand plaza, gardens, and walkways.

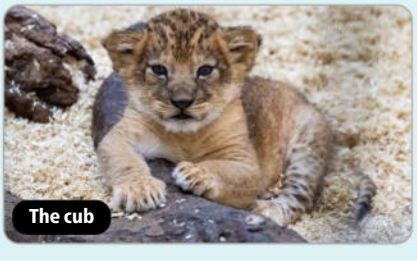
Macron and Louvre officials first announced the intended expansion in 2025, but plans were delayed by a robbery at the museum and other issues. More than 100 architecture firms submitted plans for the expansion. The winning design was created by STUDIOS Architecture Paris and Selldorf Architects, based in New York City.

Some French officials have criticized the project's expense, with one report estimating it could cost more than 1 billion euros. Some museum staff have protested the plan, arguing that the money should be used for maintenance of the existing building. The Louvre intends to raise ticket prices to pay for much of the project.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A HAPPY HELLO

An African lion cub born at the Pittsburgh Zoo in Pennsylvania is fuzzy, cute, and a welcome addition to a species that's considered vulnerable to extinction. "She's gonna be paw-pular!" the zoo said on social media.



The cub

Billie Jean King

ACING COLLEGE

Legendary tennis champion Billie Jean King has graduated from California State University at Los Angeles at age 82. King started college there before leaving in 1961 to play professionally. "It is never too late to learn, to grow, or to chase the dream that still quietly calls your name," she said.

TWISTS AND TURNS

A record-breaking roller coaster with a 95-degree drop has opened at the Six Flags Over Texas amusement park. With a height of 309 feet, a top speed of 87 miles per hour, and a length of 4,199 feet, the Tormenta Rampaging Run is the tallest, fastest, and longest coaster of its kind in the world.

The coaster

COURTESY MINISTRY OF CULTURE; GETTY IMAGES (2); PITTSBURGH ZOO & AQUARIUM; SIX FLAGS TEXAS

DID YOU KNOW?
More than 350 sites have received support after being listed on the National Trust's list of most endangered US places.

The ancient ruins of a Puebloan great house at the Greater Chaco Cultural Landscape in New Mexico

About the National Trust

In 1949, Congress created the National Trust for Historic Preservation to restore historic places for the public to view. Today, it oversees 27 sites and has broadened its mission to include promoting policies that protect historic areas and working with state and local preservation organizations.

Endangered US places named

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP), an organization dedicated to preserving historic and cultural landmarks across the US, has released its 2026 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. The sites are deteriorating or are at risk for other reasons, such as being threatened by development.

What is the list?

Since 1988, the NTHP has issued a list of endangered sites as a way of drawing the public's attention to them. For the first time, this year's list has a theme, which is equality. It was chosen to commemorate the 250th anniversary of America's founding and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which made equality a fundamental right.

What are some of the sites?

One site is the Greater Chaco Cultural Landscape, an ancestral homeland for the Pueblo people for more than 1,000 years. Encompassing thousands of square miles in New Mexico and extending into Arizona, Colorado, and Utah, the land is at risk due to the US government's plan to allow oil and gas development in the area. Another site, the Tule Lake Segregation Center in Modoc County, California, was the largest camp where Japanese Americans were wrongly imprisoned during World War II (1939–1945). The 1,100-acre area is threatened by a proposed airfield fence.

What are some other sites?

The President's House Site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is where George Washington and John Adams lived while they were President. Earlier this year, the National Park Service altered the site by removing exhibition materials related to slavery. Some of the materials have since been returned after a judge's ruling. Other sites include the Ben Moore Hotel in Montgomery, Alabama, where Black travelers could stay when segregation (the unjust separation of people by race) was legal in the 1950s.

What will happen next?

A site's inclusion on the list can save it from being destroyed or damaged by inspiring community groups to take action to preserve it. This year, for the first time, each site will receive a $25,000 grant from the NTHP to help protect it. A full list of NTHP endangered sites can be found at savingplaces.org.

WORD OF THE WEEK

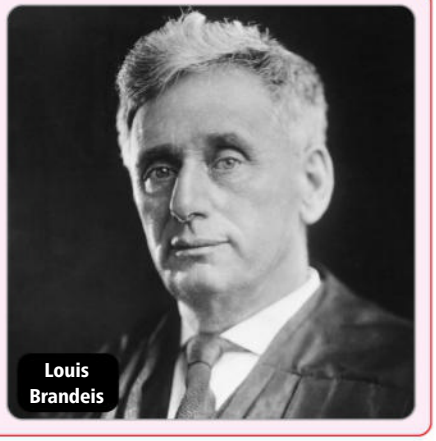
PENCIL

"Pencil" comes from the Latin word *penicillum*, which was used to describe a fine paintbrush and was the first meaning of "pencil" in English. It's also in the same family as the medicine "penicillin," because the mold that produces penicillin has a brush-like appearance when looked at under a microscope.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

June 1, 1916
Historic Supreme Court appointment

On June 1, 1916, by a vote of 47–22, the US Senate confirmed Louis Brandeis (1856–1941) as a Supreme Court justice, making him the first Jewish person to serve on the highest US court of law. Brandeis, who became known for his staunch legal defenses of free speech and equal rights, served on the court for more than 20 years until his retirement in 1939.



Louis Brandeis

The wolf, BEY03F

Wolf sighting hailed as progress

For the first time in more than 100 years, a gray wolf has traveled into Sequoia National Park in California. The 3-year-old female wolf, known as BEY03F, is believed to be searching for a mate. Earlier this year, she was spotted in Los Angeles County. Gray wolves are native to California, but humans nearly wiped them out in the 1920s. New laws that protect the endangered species have allowed the wolf population to rebound in the state.

Stephen Colbert

Famous talk show ends its run

The Late Show, which first aired in 1993, broadcast its final episode from the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York City on May 21. Stephen Colbert, the show's host since 2015, spoke about the joy he and his team felt creating more than 1,800 episodes of the popular late-night talk and variety show. Music legend Paul McCartney joined Colbert and sang "Hello, Goodbye," a Beatles song he wrote.

Most misspelled words revealed

The words "because," "definitely," and "tomorrow" are among those most likely to be misspelled in the US, according to Unscramblerer.com, a word tool website. It analyzed Google's search data from 2026 to find out what words people most wanted to know how to spell. "Bougie" took the top spot with 134,400 searches, and "favorite" and "through" rounded out the top three.

Kyle Busch in 2025

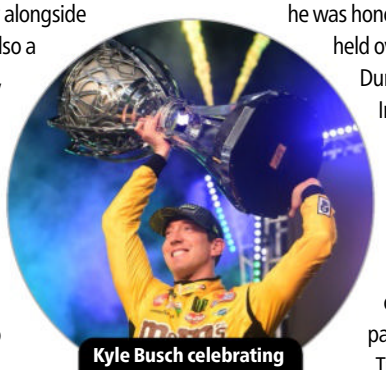
SETTING RECORDS
In 2018, Kyle Busch became the first driver to win a Cup Series race at every active track on the NASCAR schedule that year.

Racing legend is remembered

Kyle Busch, one of the most decorated race-car drivers in the history of the sport, died on May 21 at age 41 due to severe illness. Busch, who went by the nickname "Rowdy," was a two-time NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Racing) Cup Series champion known for his fierce and competitive driving style.

Busch was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1985 and grew up in a racing family alongside his older brother Kurt Busch, also a NASCAR champion. As a child, Kyle Busch learned to steer by driving a homemade go-kart around his neighborhood.

At age 16, Busch appeared in his first NASCAR race. In 2005, at age 20, he became the youngest driver at that time to win a NASCAR Cup Series.


Kyle Busch celebrating after a win in 2019

Busch went on to earn 234 victories across NASCAR's top three national series, the most in the sport's history. He won 63 Cup Series, the ninth-highest total of all time, and set the record for most wins in the NASCAR Xfinity Series with 102 victories, along with the 2009 series championship. In 2015 and 2019, he won NASCAR Cup Series championships, the highest achievement in American stock car racing. By 2023, he had set a NASCAR record for winning at least one Cup Series each year since 2005.

Following news of Busch's death, fans left flowers, hats, and toy cars outside racetracks, and he was honored during racing events held over Memorial Day weekend. During the Indianapolis 500, in Indiana, a moment of silence was observed when drivers passed lap 18, the number of one of his race cars. At the Coca-Cola 600, in North Carolina, an 8, another one of his car numbers, was painted in the infield.

Tributes poured in from leaders in the sport, including drivers who raced with Busch. Race-car champion Ricky Stenhouse Jr. said, "He gave you everything he had, every single lap, and he made all of us better for it."

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Alligators stroll across Florida golf course" ***ABC News***

GETTY IMAGES (4); CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); NTHP

Around the world

Pilgrims at Mount Arafat, near Mecca

Mecca, Saudi Arabia
Annual pilgrimage begins

More than 1.5 million Muslims gathered from May 25–29 for a yearly pilgrimage called the Hajj. During the last month of the Islamic calendar, pilgrims come from around the world to pray and perform rituals in Mecca, the holiest city in the religion of Islam. Fewer people than usual were expected to participate this year because of the war in Iran, which has led to missile and drone strikes in Saudi Arabia.

Totó la Momposina in 2002

Colombia
Mourning a music legend

The nation of Colombia is mourning singer Totó la Momposina, who died on May 17 at age 85. Born Sonia Bazanta Vides, the award-winning performer was famous for bringing traditional Colombian music to global audiences with her work, which incorporated native Caribbean and Afro-Colombian rhythms and instruments. Her children said she "carried the culture and memory of the Colombian people to the far corners of the world."

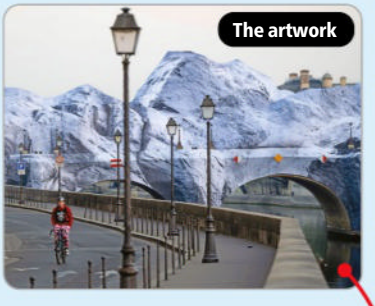
A protest march

Bolivia
President takes pay cut

Following a series of protests against the rising cost of living, Bolivian president Rodrigo Paz announced that he and his ministers will take a 50% decrease in their pay. Demonstrators have blocked roads, leading to shortages of food, fuel, and medicine in some of the nation's largest cities. Some have also demanded that Paz resign.

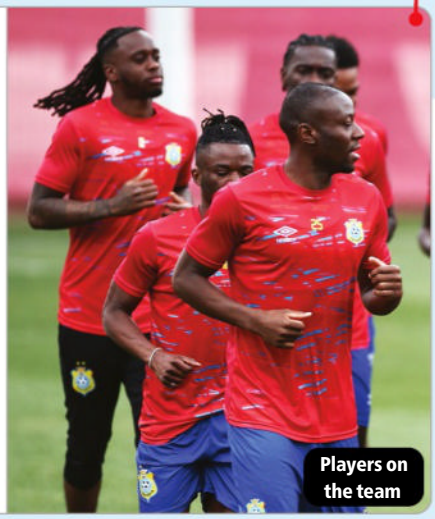
Paris, France
"Cave" installed over bridge

French artist JR is covering the city's oldest bridge with a huge inflatable cave. It will be 60 feet tall and nearly 400 feet long. JR said it's designed to make visitors stop on the Pont Neuf and "lose track of time." The work also honors the artist Christo, who wrapped the bridge in gold fabric in 1985. The installation will be open from June 6–28.


The artwork

Kinshasa, DRC
Training moved

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) men's soccer team canceled a training camp in its home country because of an outbreak of the Ebola virus. The players live outside the country but were scheduled to visit the capital city, Kinshasa, to greet fans and attend a three-day camp in preparation for the World Cup, which begins on June 11. After cases of Ebola were reported in the DRC, the team decided to train in Belgium instead.


Players on the team

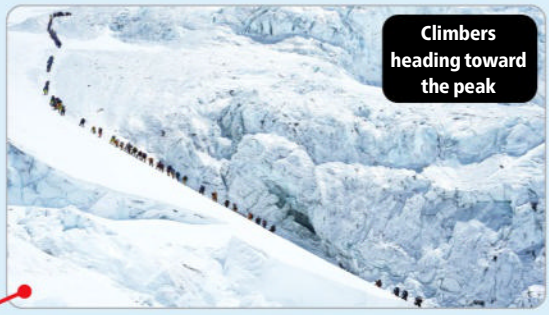
AI-GENERATED IMAGE/COCKROACH JANTA PARTY; GETTY IMAGES (6); REUTERS; PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION; ALAMY

Around the world

Cleanup will be rewarded.

Berlin, Germany
Offering perks for trash

The city of Berlin has launched a program asking people to collect garbage in return for rewards. It is part of BerlinPay, an initiative to encourage environmentally friendly behavior. Residents and visitors will be able to earn free museum tickets and boat tours by picking up litter. Other actions, such as planting flowers, will also earn rewards.


Climbers heading toward the peak

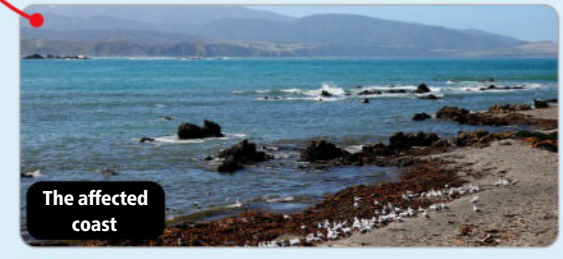
Mount Everest, Nepal
Record number of climbers

On May 20, a record 274 climbers reached the top of Mount Everest after departing from the base camp in Nepal. Everest, the world's highest mountain, sits on the border between Nepal and the Tibet region of China. This was the largest number of people ever to scale its 29,032-foot-high summit from the Nepali side on the same day. The previous record was 223 climbers. Experts warn that overcrowding on the peak can lead to safety risks.

A humpback whale

Hervey Bay, Australia
Whales make incredible journeys

Two humpback whales have astonished experts by making the longest-known journey of their species. In photos uploaded to a global database called Happywhale, researchers identified each individual by the shape and distinct color pattern of its tail. They found sightings of each whale in two different breeding grounds more than 9,300 miles apart—one whale swam from Australia to Brazil, and the other traveled from Brazil to Australia.


The affected coast

Wellington, New Zealand
Sewage spill continues

Human waste could continue spewing into the Pacific Ocean near New Zealand's capital for six more months, officials have announced. The spill began on February 4 when a wastewater treatment plant broke down, sending unprocessed sewage from the city's toilets into the sea. While workers clean and repair the facility, people have been warned not to swim in the area.

India
A bug for politics

A fake political party called the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has gained more than 22 million online followers. Abhijeet Dipke, age 30, launched the movement on May 16 as a joke in response to a comment from India's chief justice allegedly comparing unemployed Indian youth to cockroaches who "start attacking everyone" through media or activism. Embracing the insect as a symbol of endurance, the CJP calls itself "one large, stubborn swarm."

The party uses this AI-created image to promote itself.

Should adults read books for kids?

Some people say children's literature is for everyone, but others disagree.

What you need to know

- **More than 24,000 books were released in the juvenile fiction category in 2025.**
- **According to the Association of American Publishers, children's and young adult books in the US in 2025 accounted for $2.47 billion in sales.**
- **One study in the UK found that adults read young adult fiction to seek a sense of comfort.**
- **Another study found that about 30% of adults bought at least one book from *The Hunger Games* series.**

In recent years, more and more adults have been reading novels written specifically for younger readers. In fact, there are campaigns, like Middle Grade March and Get Caught Reading, encouraging adults to read children's books. And one survey found that 74% of people who read young adult novels (typically for readers ages 12 to 18) are over age 18 and 28% were older than 28. Many literacy experts and book lovers say it doesn't matter what people read—it just matters that they're reading at all. But others believe books for young readers should be left to kids and teens. What do you think? Should adults read books written for kids?

Yes—they can be shared by all

Children's books are full of a sense of wonder, adventure, and playfulness, and no one is ever too old to experience those things. Whether adults are feeling nostalgic and re-reading a book they loved as a child or discovering a new one, they deserve to enjoy them. When a grown-up reads a great children's book, they can share and discuss it with the young people in their lives. That's a wonderful way to bond. And books for young readers are just as compelling as books written for adults. They have interesting and meaningful characters and plots, and they tackle important issues, often with humor and insight. They're for everyone!

No—grown-ups have their own books

When you're young, one of the great joys of reading is feeling like you've been transported to another world. It's one of the few experiences kids can have on their own, and adults should let it be all theirs. Besides, there are so many books for adults, they'll never have time to read them all. Why would they read a book that's not written for them? Authors also aren't thinking of grown-ups when they're writing for kids, and they shouldn't have to. If publishing companies start targeting adults, authors could feel pressured to start writing books with them in mind. That would affect their work and wouldn't be fair to young readers.

YES Three reasons adults should read books for kids

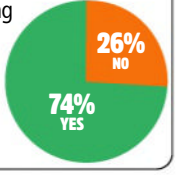
1. **It's not necessary to deprive adults of the joy and wonder of reading a kids' book.**
2. **Children and adults can share book recommendations and have interesting conversations about what they've read.**
3. **Books written for young readers are shorter but offer as much insight and humor as adult books.**

NO Three reasons adults should not read books for kids

1. **Reading is a chance to step into another world, and kids deserve to have that experience all for themselves.**
2. **Adults should spend their time reading the millions of books written for them.**
3. **Children's books are written with kids in mind. If authors start catering to adults as well, it would change their writing.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if kids should be on reality television. Most of you are OK with young people starring in unscripted shows: 74% said yes, and 26% said no.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think adults should read books for kids or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Taking to the stage

Singer-songwriter Pink is preparing to host a major award show.

Pink is one of the world's best-selling musical artists, known for her powerful vocals and epic acrobatic performances. On June 7, she's taking on a new role as host of the 79th Annual Tony Awards. The event celebrates excellence on Broadway, which has played a part in Pink's music journey.

Pink in concert in 2024

Born Alecia Moore, Pink grew up in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. As a child, she struggled with asthma, and the exercises she did to improve her breathing helped develop her singing voice. She also trained as a competitive gymnast from ages 4 to 12, perfecting skills she continues to use in her concerts.

Pink began performing at music venues in Philadelphia as a teenager. Her career launched with the 2000 R&B album *Can't Take Me Home*. A year later, she shifted toward a pop-rock sound with the album *M!ssundaztood*. Some of her most popular songs, such as "So What" and "Try," explore themes of self-doubt and struggling.

In total, Pink has released seven studio albums and sold more than 60 million copies worldwide. She's won three Grammy Awards and was nominated for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame earlier this year.

Hosting the Tony Awards is especially meaningful for Pink. Her mother used to take her to New York City to see Broadway shows. Today, she has songs featured in the Broadway productions of *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* and *& Juliet*. "Broadway has shaped my life and how I put my own shows together," she said. "These people give magic every single day, and I cannot wait to celebrate them with the entire world."

Pink

MUSIC MILESTONE
In 2019, Pink became the first international artist to receive the Brit Award, a top UK music honor, for Outstanding Contribution to Music.

Radio legend retires

Broadcast journalist Bill Kurtis has retired from serving as the judge and scorekeeper on NPR's popular weekly comedy news quiz show *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!* In 1966, Kurtis was working at a radio station in Kansas when his on-air tornado warning helped save lives. He went on to become a reporter for a Chicago radio station and a co-anchor of *CBS Morning News* before joining *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* in 2014. His deep voice and laugh were a signature part of the show, which he described as "an incredible chapter" in his life.

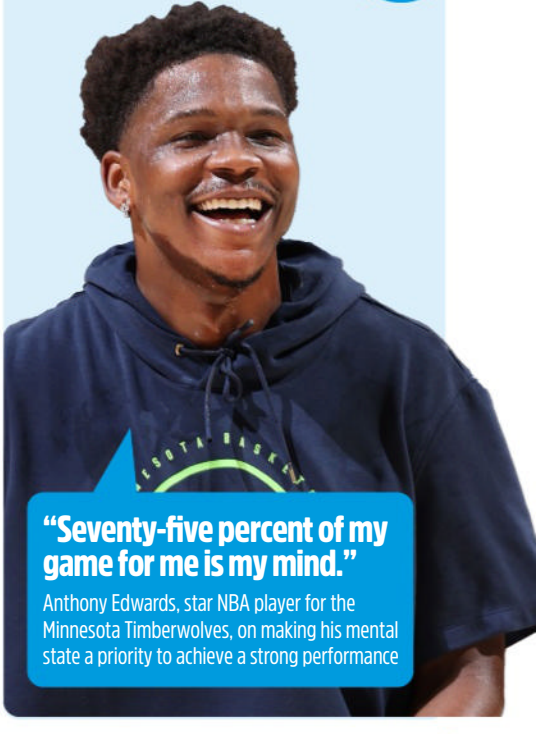
Bill Kurtis

Marsai Martin

A star with a vision

Actress and producer Marsai Martin, age 21, is creating a film adaptation of *Amari and the Night Brothers*, the first book in the *Supernatural Investigations* series by B. B. Alston. Martin rose to fame when she began acting in the ABC sitcom *Black-ish* in 2014. In 2019, at age 14, she became the youngest executive producer in Hollywood with the film *Little*, which she also starred in. Her new project follows a Black girl who discovers a magical world while searching for her brother. Martin said she is excited to shine "a light on the Black girls who are really trying to find themselves."

OVERHEARD



"Seventy-five percent of my game for me is my mind."
Anthony Edwards, star NBA player for the Minnesota Timberwolves, on making his mental state a priority to achieve a strong performance

GETTY IMAGES

CLOWNING AROUND
Because of their playful behavior, a group of kea parrots is referred to as a circus.

Bruce the kea parrot, holding an object with his tongue (right)

Parrot turns disability into strength

A parrot in New Zealand named Bruce is missing his upper beak, but he has turned this apparent disability into an advantage. In contests of dominance with other birds, Bruce lunges at them with his lower beak out, like a knight thrusting a lance in a jousting contest. The technique has been so effective that Bruce has become an alpha (dominant animal) among his group of birds.

Bruce is a kea, a species of parrot native to New Zealand. Researchers found him on the country's South Island in 2013, and it is not clear how he lost the top part of his beak. To improve his chances of survival, he was brought to the Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, where he now lives with 11 other birds.

Keas use their beaks to interact.

Like other keas, Bruce is good at problem-solving, and this has helped him thrive. While most keas clean their feathers with their upper beaks, Bruce has been observed using small, sharp stones, holding them between his tongue and lower beak. Since he can't really chew, Bruce mashes his food against rocks or fence posts.

In captivity, keas often fight over food or places to perch. For a recent study, researchers observed more than 200 contests between male keas at the wildlife reserve. Most of the birds kicked their opponents or attempted to bite them, but by combining kicks with his jousting technique, Bruce won all 36 contests he was involved in. Experts believe Bruce is the only one who can use his unusual strategy because other keas' intact upper beaks curve over their lower beaks, covering the sharp tip he wields.

Winning these fights has enabled Bruce to get first pick of the best food at feeding time and receive grooming from other male birds. Scientists also found that among his peers, Bruce had the lowest level of a common stress hormone called corticosterone, which suggests that he is in a secure position of dominance and doesn't have to worry about losing it. "We associate disability with struggle and stress, but Bruce shows us it can be the opposite," lead researcher Alex Grabham told *National Geographic*.

Parrots can use names

Experts recently found that parrots can learn names and use them to communicate. Many animals appear to identify or address each other with specific sounds, but it's difficult to know if they're using names the way humans do. For a new study, researchers surveyed pet owners whose parrots repeat human words.

Out of 884 parrots from a range of species, the scientists found that nearly half used names. Sometimes the birds used names to describe or refer to individual humans and other animals, such as the family dog. Many said names in social situations, such as greeting someone. Some parrots also said their own names in order to get attention.

WILD WEST Colorado, the eighth largest US state, has four national parks and more than 40 state parks.

A rendering of the library

A new library for nature

Thornton, Colorado, is getting a new library—and it's not just for readers. The Anythink Nature Library is being designed to help people connect with nature. Patrons will be able to borrow not only books but also outdoor gear and scientific equipment.

Standing on 140 acres of land, the space will feature real boulders visitors can climb, a nature lab for interactive experiments, a sunroom and a dark room, and resources for learning more about nature. Outside, it will have gardens, an amphitheater, and a bridge to explore a nearby trail system. There will even be a mud pit so visitors can enjoy "an experience of muddy, dirty play," branch manager Maria Mayo-Peaseley told Colorado Public Radio.

The library will also lend items such as hiking poles, night vision goggles, and litter cleanup kits, offering opportunities for people to try outdoor activities. "This library is all about building access points for our community no matter who they are, their experience in nature, or their background," Mayo-Peaseley said. The facility is set to open to the public in August.

Animal of the week: Slow loris

Officials in Bangladesh recently rescued an adult male Bengal slow loris after it wandered into a village. These small, endangered primates have large eyes that help them see in the dark. The animal was released into a nearby forest.

- **LIFESPAN:** 15 to 20 years in the wild
- **HABITAT:** Forests in Southeast Asia
- **SIZE:** 10 to 15 inches, about 2 to 4.5 pounds
- **DIET:** Tree sap, nectar, bird eggs, and insects
- **FUN FACT:** The only venomous primate, the slow loris licks a gland on its arm to make its bite toxic.

Good week / Bad week

El Segundo blue butterflies

An abandoned town called Surfridge has become an unlikely haven for about 17,000 El Segundo blue butterflies, a species found only on the coast of California. More than 24,000 native plants were planted to help the rare butterflies thrive.

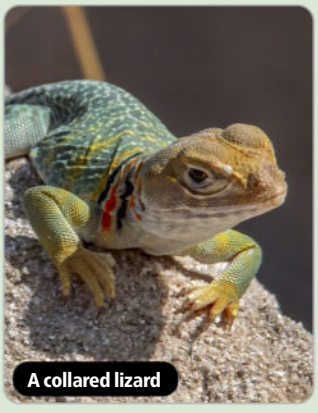
The Potomac River

The nonprofit American Rivers named the Potomac the most endangered US river of 2026. Concerns include data centers being built along the river and a sewage spill in January that polluted the water, posing risks to plants, animals, and humans.

Ask an expert: "Why do lizards like to sit out in the sun?" Akshara, 8, California

Jonathan Losos
Professor of biology, Washington University in St. Louis

Warm-blooded animals like us generate heat inside our bodies, which requires energy. Lizards are cold-blooded, so they let the Sun do the job instead. Sunbathing helps lizards warm up, and warmer temperatures help them run faster, think effectively, and digest food more efficiently.



A collared lizard

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Washington University in St. Louis at washu.edu.

ANYTHINK NATURE LIBRARY; ALAMY (2); GETTY IMAGES (2); ON LEFT PAGE: UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND; PATRICK WOOD / UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND; GETTY IMAGES (2)

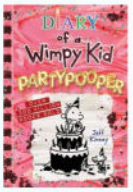
The 50 Books KIDS LOVE MOST

***The Week Junior* surveyed more than 200 children across the US about the books they enjoyed so much that they would recommend them to other kids. We turned their selections into this one-of-a-kind list that features books from all your favorite genres. Start your summer reading with these page-turners!**

LEGENDARY SERIES

THE BABY-SITTERS CLUB
By Ann M. Martin, adapted and illustrated by Ellen T. Crenshaw

Nineteen books from the classic series about seventh-graders who start a child-care business have been turned into graphic novels, and *The Week Junior* readers find them hilarious and relatable. "It's fun to get caught up in the adventures," said Ava, 10. The 18th installment, *Jessi Ramsey, Pet-Sitter*, dives into the wacky world of caring for a houseful of pets, including snakes! *Ages 8–12*

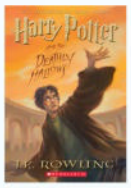


DIARY OF A WIMPY KID
By Jeff Kinney

This ongoing series of 20 books starring middle-schooler Greg and his pals makes kids laugh as much as ever. "I read the first one when I was 7, and I still enjoy reading the books now," said Leo, 13. Beckett, 11, thinks the secret to the series' success is spinning ordinary happenings (like a birthday party in the latest installment, *Partypooper*) into funny situations. Kids say the illustrated journal-style entries are fun. *Ages 8+*

DOG MAN
By Dav Pilkey

Filled with hijinks and heart, the 14-book series centers on the title character, a police officer who is half dog and half human. "*The Dog Man* series is the best because the plots are ridiculous," said Sawyer, 10. "All the silliness makes me laugh." In the latest installment, *Dog Man: Big Jim Believes*, Dog Man and his friends must save their city from evil (but adorable) Space Cuties. *Ages 7–11*

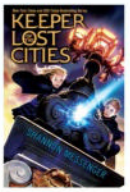


HARRY POTTER
By J.K. Rowling

This blockbuster, seven-book fantasy series "not only transports you to another amazing world but also introduces you to magical characters that feel so close they could be your friends," said Ivan, 13. Lyann, 11, also found the descriptive prose easy to imagine: "There are so many details in the words that I can literally picture the setting in my head." The series finale, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, contains The Battle of Hogwarts, which "provides a very good conclusion to an outstanding series of books," according to Matthew, 9. *Ages 8+*

I SURVIVED
By Lauren Tarshis

What did it feel like on the deck of the Titanic after the ship hit an iceberg or on the battlefield in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, during the Civil War? In this long-running historical fiction series packed with photographs, a fictional child protagonist navigates a real event, bringing the subject matter to life. "It's a super-fun way of learning about history," said Clara, 9. *Ages 8–12*



KEEPER OF THE LOST CITIES
By Shannon Messenger

In the opener to the epic fantasy series that intertwines adventure and magic, a 12-year-old telepathic girl discovers that she's actually an elf! "This series is full of bright and complex characters who are trying to save both the human race and elves," said Ivan, 13. "I love this series because it's so fun to read about Sophie's adventures with her gifted and kind friends," added Shirya, 12. *Ages 8–12*

THE LAND OF STORIES
By Chris Colfer

This six-book series "combines stories and fairy tales everyone already knows and loves, then puts a new and fun twist on them," according to Micah, 12. The opener, *The Wishing Spell*, begins when twins fall into a book of fairy tales. Our readers felt they did the same: "This story is so cool because it has characters from fairy tales kids read about when they were younger," said Eloise, 12. Added Micah: "I wish I could be the main character." *Ages 8–12*

Symbol key

- **Classic**
- **Newbery Medal or Honor**
- **Made into a TV show or movie**

Enter to win books!

This summer, we challenge you to read three books. They can be from this reading list or any books you choose. Once you've read them, with an adult's help go to tinyurl.com/TWJUS-ReadingChallenge2026 to enter our sweepstakes for a chance to win books. Five kids will win! All winners will be drawn at random. The deadline to enter is August 5.

PERCY JACKSON AND THE OLYMPIANS
By Rick Riordan

"Woven like an ancient Greek scarf" is how 10-year-old Amélia aptly describes the plot of this seven-book series starring Percy, a boy who is the demigod son of the Greek ruler of the sea. She added, "I like how it educates you about Greek mythology but at the same time makes you laugh." The series opener, *The Lightning Thief*, contains the "perfect amount of fighting and drama," noted 11-year-old Kyla. *Ages 8+*

WINGS OF FIRE: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
By Tui T. Sutherland, illustrated by Mike Holmes

Dragon battles practically pop off the page in the graphic novel adaptation of the best-selling *Wings of Fire* series. "There are many arcs in the story and each book is written in a different dragon's point of view, which makes the plot more interesting," said Lyann, 11. Ten-year-old GiGi added, "I like it because it has a lot of action and the illustrations are cool." *Ages 8–12*

THE VANDERBEEKERS
By Katrina Yan Glaser

If our readers could be part of a fictional family, joining the five Vanderbeeker siblings in their New York City brownstone would be a popular option. "This is the most perfect series with the quirkiest and most fun kids!" said Paige, 13. In the series debut, *The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street*, the siblings have to persuade a landlord to renew their lease so they don't have to move. *Ages 8–12*

FANTASY FAVORITES

DRAGON PEARL
By Yoon Ha Lee

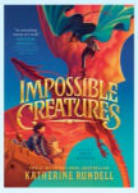
In this novel inspired by Korean mythology, a 13-year-old girl runs away from her home planet to search for her missing brother. "I've probably read the book over 20 times!" said Jocelyn, 11. "It's very suspenseful and exciting, and I'd recommend it to any middle-grade reader who enjoys diverse fantasy books." If you're a fan, check out the sequel *Tiger Honor*. *Ages 8–12*

GROWING HOME
By Beth Ferry, illustrated by The Fan Brothers

An enchanted fish tank sets the stage for this charming story filled with delightful characters. A grumpy goldfish, inquisitive spider, and two houseplants receive magical powers when they're splashed with water from the tank. They must work together to protect their human family from an unscrupulous antique dealer. "The characters are funny and help each other solve exciting problems," said Archer, 8. *Ages 8–12*

HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE
By Diana Wynne Jones

Published last fall, the deluxe 40th-anniversary edition introduces this magical fantasy to another generation of readers. A girl, left old by a witch's curse, flees to a wizard's castle and makes a dangerous deal with a fire demon to regain her youth. "The story is creative, and the characters are otherworldly!" said Barrett, 12. *Ages 10–14*



IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES
By Katherine Rundell, illustrated by Ashley Mackenzie

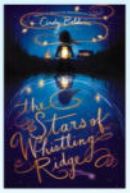
A fantastic storyline with lots of adventure, amazing characters, and a lesson in bravery are among the reasons *The Week Junior* readers recommended this blockbuster series opener. A boy discovers a hidden portal to a group of islands where magical creatures still roam, but an evil force threatens them. "It's very suspenseful and opened my mind," said Henry, 9. *Ages 8+*

THE LAND OF ROAR
By Jenny McLachlan, illustrated by Ben Mantle

Eleven-year-old twins have to rescue their grandfather from a world with dragons and ninja wizards. No one else is better suited to the challenge because the twins actually created the world, which they thought was make-believe, when they were little. "This fantasy novel is magical, and it blew my mind the first time I read it," said Eloise, 12. The sixth (and final) book in the series is expected to be published next year. *Ages 8–12*

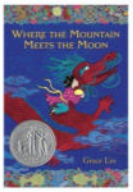
THE MARVELLERS
By Dhonielle Clayton

Harry Potter meets *Keeper of the Lost Cities* in the opener of the four-book Conjureverse series featuring an 11-year-old girl who is the first person from her race to attend a centuries-old school that floats in the clouds. When a criminal escapes and a teacher goes missing, it will be up to the girl and her classmates to figure out what's behind their disappearances. "The book teaches kids to stand up for themselves," said Evelyn, 8. *Ages 8–12*



THE STARS OF WHISTLING RIDGE
By Cindy Baldwin

A girl who steals her mother's wish jars to secure a home in North Carolina finds herself torn when she finds out that magic is being drained from her town. "A heartwarming story about friendship, sisterhood, and the place that you call home leaves a lasting message," said Emma, 11. "I couldn't put this book down." *Ages 8–12*



WHERE THE MOUNTAIN MEETS THE MOON
By Grace Lin

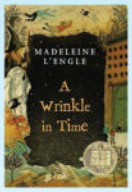
This masterpiece, inspired by Chinese folklore, features the journey of a poor girl who seeks the Old Man of the Moon to bring her family more wealth. But she discovers that gratitude—not money—brings happiness. "I've read this book four times! I love it because it is just unbelievable," said 9-year-old Kate. "It always gives me a good feeling." *Ages 8–12*

WILDERLORE
By Amanda Foody

In the opener to the five-book series, an 11-year-old boy bonds with a magical beast and travels through mysterious woods to protect the world from evildoers. After crossing many hurdles, he has to decide whether to return home or continue his adventures. "The *Wilderlore* series is so much fun! It's like *Pokémon* meets *Avatar*!" said Paige, 13. *Ages 8–12*

BOOKS AND ILLUSTRATIONS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS

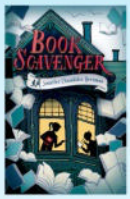
Growing Home



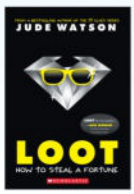
A WRINKLE IN TIME
By Madeleine L'Engle
Published more than 60 years ago, the story of a teen girl who time-travels to locate her father who mysteriously disappeared is still captivating modern readers. "This sci-fi book with strange worlds and mysterious creatures is one of my favorites because it brings to life what isn't possible and makes it possible," said Emily, 13. *Ages 10–14*

MYSTERY FAVORITES

BLOOD IN THE WATER
By Tiffany D. Jackson
A Black girl vacationing on Martha's Vineyard investigates the death of a popular teenager. Did he drown? Was he attacked by a shark? Or was he murdered? What she finds out changes her life. "*Blood in the Water* is suspenseful, has many great twists, and leaves you guessing to the end," said Charley, 10. *Ages 10–14*



BOOK SCAVENGER
By Jennifer Chambliss Bertman
Friends who love solving puzzles stumble upon a mysterious book, *The Gold-Bug*, that they think was created by their literary idol before he was attacked and went into a coma. What secrets might the book reveal? "The exciting story kept me on my toes," said Emma, 11. "There were so many different elements of mystery that excited me, and there were a lot of 'What?' and 'Wow!' moments." *Ages 8–12*



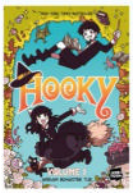
LOOT
By Jude Watson
March's father was a jewel thief, so when his dying words were "find jewels," March assumed he'd be looking for precious stones. Instead, his dad meant Jules, his long-lost sister! "*Loot* is a thrilling, edge-of-your-seat book that keeps you wanting to read more," said Sara, 10. What the siblings decide to do when they unite will totally surprise you. *Ages 8–12*

MURDER AT THE MUSEUM
By Alasdair Beckett-King, illustrated by Claire Powell
The first book in the Montgomery Bonbon series "is funny, and it keeps you in suspense until the end!" said Amélia, 10. Ten-year-old Bonnie disguises herself with a wig and fake mustache to crack the case of a theft at a local museum. "I loved the book because you can relate to Bonnie, and it's also very fast-paced and witty," added Amélia. *Ages 8–12*

Murder at the Museum

THE QUEEN OF OCEAN PARKWAY
By Sarvenaz Tash
An 11-year-old podcaster from New York City and her friend travel through time investigating the mysterious disappearance of their neighbor. Sunny, 12, said, "Even though time travel isn't possible, or at least it hasn't proven to be yet, the author makes you easily believe that it is." *Ages 8–12*

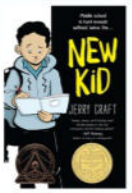
GRAPHIC NOVEL FAVORITES



HOOKY
By Míriam Bonastre Tur
This trilogy kicks off when twin witches miss the bus to their magic school and decide to "play hooky" (skip school) and find a magical instructor of their own. "I really liked this book because the story is awesome, and I loved the colorful speech bubbles," said Amélia, 10. "For anyone who likes magic and fun, this is perfect!" *Ages 8–12*

LIGHTFALL
By Tim Probert
Both the artwork and the writing are top-notch in this four-book series about two pals trying to save the world from going dark forever. "It is an unlikely friendship, and the plot keeps you interested," said Macy, 11. "The artwork is vivid, magical, and immersive." *Ages 8–12*

MY SISTER THE WEREBEAST
By Alina Tysoe
This hilarious graphic novel may remind you of *The Incredibles*, with a sprinkle of *The Baby-Sitters Club*. While their monster-hunting parents are away, siblings must take care of their baby sister who has started to acquire supernatural abilities, like breathing fire and shape-shifting. "This amazing book is about embracing differences in a fun, touching way," said Rory, 12. *Ages 8–12*



NEW KID
By Jerry Craft
The only graphic novel to ever win a Newbery Medal, *New Kid* explores the complexities of race, friendships, and privilege in the most entertaining way. A Black seventh-grader doesn't feel like he fits in anywhere when he transfers to a prestigious, mostly white school. "*New Kid* is my favorite graphic novel because it tells a good story," said Anaya, 11. *Ages 8–12*

PARACHUTE KIDS
By Betty C. Tang
After a dream vacation in California, three siblings from the East Asian country of Taiwan remain in the US while their parents fly home. They strive to balance household tasks and schoolwork without getting on each other's nerves. "*Parachute Kids* helps you understand what it's like to move to a new country, builds empathy, and teaches you about different cultures and experiences," said Laasya, 12. *Ages 8–12*

How this book list came together

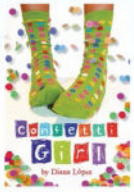
To compile our list of 50 books, we invited children across the country to tell us what their all-time favorite books from different genres are and why. We also asked our current and former Junior Council members to share the books they love most. The books that received the most votes made it onto the list. It's full of award-winning reads with diverse characters, magical plots, and suspenseful moments—and proof that kids make the best book critics!

Parachute Kids

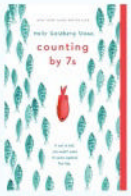
Summer of Reading

REALISTIC FICTION FAVORITES

ALONE
By Megan E. Freeman
In this novel in verse, a 12-year-old wakes up to find that everyone in her Colorado town has been suddenly evacuated except her. She even has to live in an empty apartment! "It's so moving, and you feel like your heart might leave your body in tears, but you also feel like the main character is your best friend," said Rory, 12. *Ages 10–14*



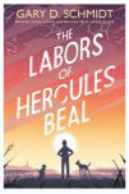
CONFETTI GIRL
By Diana López
After Lina's mother dies, she must navigate the challenges of middle school in Texas without much support. "She finds out she can't play volleyball for this season because of her bad grades," said Simone, 10. Mexican traditions, such as cascarones (hollowed, painted eggshells filled with confetti), are sprinkled throughout the novel. *Ages 8–12*



COUNTING BY 7s
By Holly Goldberg Sloan
Following the death of her adoptive parents in a tragic accident, a 12-year-old, who is comforted when he counts by 7s, finds a loving support system in some of the least expected places. "The book shows how very different people can come together and help each other when they need it most," said Annie, 12. Added Charley, 10: "You will feel like you know each of the characters personally by the end of the story." *Ages 10–14*

EVERY SOUL A STAR
By Wendy Mass
Three teens meet at an astronomy camp for a solar eclipse and learn about stars, friendship, and themselves. "The story is really sweet and makes you think about how people can be different but still connect," said Georgia, 11. Told from the first-person perspectives of each of the teens, the book also contains facts about astronomy. *Ages 8–12*

HEAT
By Mike Lupica
A 12-year-old Cuban American pitcher in New York City covers up his father's death so he's not separated from his older brother. Meanwhile, he needs to find a way to prove his age so he can participate in the Little League World Series. "Even though the book is for sports fans, the story isn't all sports, so anyone can enjoy it," noted Drew, 10. *Ages 10–14*



THE LABORS OF HERCULES BEAL
By Gary D. Schmidt
After his parents pass away, a seventh-grader's teacher gives him a surprising assignment: Re-create the 12 modern versions of the labors of Hercules (a mythological hero celebrated for strength and bravery). As Gwendolyn, 12, explained, "Each of the labors is something that helps him figure out who he is and who he wants to be." *Ages 10–14*

MS. BIXBY'S LAST DAY
By John David Anderson
Three sixth-grade boys go on a quest all over town to collect the favorite things of a beloved teacher who has to leave her job because she has cancer. When they bring their collection to the hospital, they realize that memories are the most important gift. Said Alice, 10: "It might not make sense right now, but if you read the book, I think you will enjoy it." *Ages 8–12*

Meet our Author Ambassadors!

Throughout our Summer of Reading campaign, *The Week Junior* will feature new stories from these literary heavyweights. You will be able to find them in our Book Club column on page 22.

KWAME ALEXANDER

The Newbery Medal–winning author, known for *The Crossover* series, is launching a new series of graphic novels! *The Brainstormerz: Money Talks* follows three best friends who team up to earn enough to buy the coolest new phone.

TIFFANY D. JACKSON

The popular author is releasing a follow-up to her best-selling middle-grade book, *Blood in the Water*. Debuting in August, *Ghost in the Night* is an edge-of-your-seat murder mystery that takes place in Savannah, Georgia.

ERIN ENTRADA KELLY

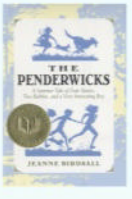
A two-time Newbery Medalist ventures into the dystopian (broken world) genre with *The Second Life of Snap*. A resourceful 12-year-old who thinks she doesn't like robots changes her mind when she meets Snap, one that has a limited battery life.

JEFF KINNEY

The *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* creator will debut another spin-off this August—*Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Spooky Stories 2*. It's a collection of hilariously terrifying tales with monsters, ghouls, and giant insects. Keep the lights on!

BRANDON MULL

The author of the epic *Fablehaven* fantasy series is back with a new series: *Guardians*. In the first book, *Forbidden Mountain*, kids face a darkness that threatens their world. The cliffhanger ending will leave you eager for the next volume.

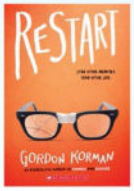


THE PENDERWICKS
By Jeanne Birdsall
The five-book series follows four sisters from childhood to adulthood. In the opener, *A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy*, the family travels to the Berkshires in Massachusetts for their summer vacation. Mae, 9, said, "It's funny and has a lot of adventures." *Ages 8–12*

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND AUTHORS COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS

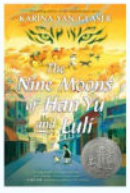
Summer of Reading

THE REMARKABLE JOURNEY OF COYOTE SUNRISE
By Dan Gemeinhart
Twelve-year-old Coyote persuades her father to drive cross-country to retrieve a memory box she buried in her old neighborhood, which is about to be demolished. Marinn, 9, shared her favorite quote from the book: "It's hard, though, when everyone carries around a heart inside them that is so loud and strong and so easily broken." *Ages 8–12*



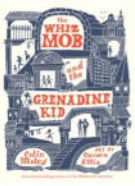
RESTART
By Gordon Korman
What would you do if you lost your memory? After falling off a roof, a middle-school bully can't recall his past actions, but his victims fill him in. Now he's at a crossroads—should he start fresh or pick up where he left off? "It's so interesting to get a perspective on someone with amnesia," said Fern, 13. *Ages 8+*

HISTORICAL FICTION FAVORITES



THE NINE MOONS OF HAN YU AND LULI
By Karina Yan Glaser
Han Yu, a boy who lives in ancient China, and Luli, a girl living in New York City in 1931, both navigate difficult circumstances—a plague and the Great Depression. "Their stories intertwine in a way that makes you want to turn the pages," said Sunny, 12. Kennedy, 10, adds that the beautifully written story has "big surprises." *Ages 8+*

NUMBER THE STARS
By Lois Lowry
It's 1943, and the Nazis occupy Denmark in World War II. A brave 10-year-old helps her family hide her Jewish best friend by pretending she's her older sister. Later, she delivers a secret package to a boat that's helping her friend and other Jewish refugees escape to Sweden. "It's a sweet story about friendship and family," said Emma, 11. "Every chapter ends on a cliff-hanger, which makes you want to read more!" *Ages 9+*

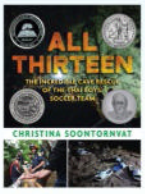


THE WHIZ MOB AND THE GRENADINE KID
By Colin Meloy, illustrated by Carson Ellis
This fun caper, set in France in 1961, centers on a 12-year-old pickpocket who joins a gang dubbed The Whiz Mob. But soon the tables are turned, and the pickpocket is the American victim of a con! "It's a funny and thought-provoking story with beautiful language, vivid descriptions, and detailed illustrations that bring it to life," said 12-year-old Dax. *Ages 8–12*

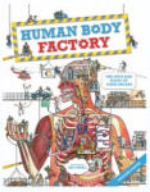
THE PARTITION PROJECT
By Saadia Faruqi
For a journalism class project, a Pakistani American girl documents her grandmother's difficult experiences during the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan (the division of British India into two independent nations, Pakistan and India). "The story offers an engaging, heartfelt, and accessible way for young readers to learn about this event through personal stories," said Inaya, 8. "It also tells the importance of family history." *Ages 10–14*

THE WAR THAT SAVED MY LIFE
By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
A 10-year-old living in London during World War II escapes from her abusive mother to be with her brother in the English countryside. "This book is about finding love even through pain," said Kyla, 11. "It has humor, history, drama, and so much love. It makes you feel good inside and out." *Ages 9+*

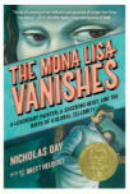
NONFICTION FAVORITES



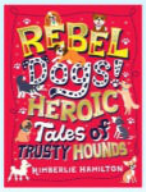
ALL THIRTEEN
By Christina Soontornvat
Packed with incredible pictures, this book captures the drama of an 18-day rescue operation to save soccer players and their coach who were trapped in a cave in Thailand. Fern, 13, said: "I love the perspectives of this scary event." The author shares her experience meeting the team. *Ages 8+*



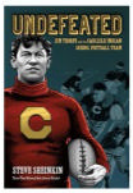
HUMAN BODY FACTORY
By Dan Green, illustrated by Edmond Davis
This oversize science book delves into your insides. It begins with the brain, described as the control center "bossing all of the body's activities." Fun-to-read blurbs and the illustrations set this book apart. Maverick, 8, said, "I give the illustrator a thumbs-up!" *Ages 8+*



THE MONA LISA VANISHES
By Nicholas Day, illustrated by Brett Helquist
Did you know that Leonardo da Vinci's famous masterpiece was stolen from the Louvre museum in Paris in 1911? This fast-paced true story takes you back in time, from the creation of the painting in the 1500s. "It's history, thrills, and fun in one crazy book," said Caroline, 10. *Ages 10+*



REBEL DOGS! HEROIC TALES OF TRUSTY HOUNDS
By Kimberlie Hamilton
This illustrated book features heroic dogs that have done amazing things. You'll discover a canine that found a cave complex filled with prehistoric paintings and a pack of dogs who helped protect penguins. "I liked reading about cool things dogs have done!" said Tommy, 7. *Ages 8+*



UNDEFEATED
By Steve Sheinkin
If you love a good underdog sports story, this book about Jim Thorpe (1887–1953), star of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School football team, is it. "Not many people know about Jim Thorpe, but he's probably the best athlete of all time," said Elijah, 12. This fascinating volume chronicles the rise of the first superstar Native American football player despite experiencing racism on and off the field. *Ages 12+*

Kids' favorite genres revealed

The Week Junior's readers told us they love to read about imaginary worlds the most.

48% Fantasy
28% Realistic fiction
10% Mystery
5% Nonfiction
5% Science fiction
4% Historical fiction

The Whiz Mob and the Grenadine Kid

BOOKS AND ILLUSTRATIONS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS

My summer reading memories

Fill out this form so you can capture who you are as a reader right now! Save it in a special place and look at it again next summer so you can see if your choice in books has changed or stayed the same. Happy reading!

Name **Age**

Book I enjoyed most this summer:

Place where I most liked reading:

Best book I've ever read:

Favorite character:

Favorite author:

Favorite genre:

Book I hope to read next:

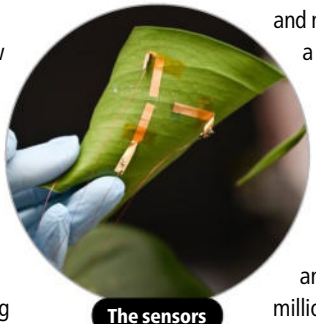
SMELLY SIGNALS
Some plants produce bad smells to keep pests away, while others use unpleasant odors to attract pollinators.

Scientists tested the stickers on monstera plants like this one.

Stickers can sense thirsty plants

Scientists have created electronic sensors that can be placed on a plant's leaves, like a sticker to alert people when the plant needs water. They connect to a computer to track water levels and aren't harmful to the plant.

It can be hard to tell if a plant is thirsty (see sidebar), and sticking your finger in the soil is not always an accurate measure. The sensors, created by researchers at the University of Texas, measure how much moisture is stored in a plant, making it easier to know when it needs water and how much to give it.



The sensors

The sensors are made of a thin, flexible material called graphene, which is sustainable (can be produced without harming the environment). They work by sending a small jolt of electricity into the leaf, which causes ions inside the leaf to move toward or away from the sensor. Ions are atoms (the building blocks of all matter) that have an electrical charge. Scientists can then use this information to determine how much water is in a plant.

The researchers said the stickers are more accurate than other methods people use to tell whether their plants are thirsty. The sensors also allow people to keep an eye on many plants at the same time without having to check each one. They can also check their plants almost instantly, at any time of day or night. This could help plant lovers and farmers predict when their plants will need water before their health is affected.

Jean Anne Incorvia, a leader of the study, said that being able to directly measure and monitor the moisture levels in a leaf over time "gives us more information to understand the health of our plant ecosystems, whether that's an individual plant or an entire forest."

The sensors use only a tiny amount of energy to run, and one solar panel could power millions of them at once. The devices could be used on large farms or in forests, where it would be difficult to connect to the regular power supply system.

The researchers hope their invention can help farmers grow healthier crops in larger quantities. The technology could also help to predict and stop wildfires. Dry plants can easily catch fire from natural sparks like lightning or human-made flames, and the sensors could warn when areas of forest and woodland are getting dangerously dry.

Checking water levels

Brown or wilting leaves can indicate that a plant needs more water, but it can also mean it's gotten too much. To spot a thirsty plant, look closely. Dry soil shrinking away from the edges of the pot or cracks in a garden bed are a sign that plants could use a good soak. Curled or shriveled leaves might mean the plant is holding onto water because it's running low.

If a plant isn't growing as fast as it should, it may not be getting enough nutrients from the soil. Living things need these to grow, and plants' roots need moisture to absorb them. Being thirsty also leaves plants weak and unable to defend themselves against pests. If many little bugs like spider mites or aphids start to appear on your plants, this could mean they need to be watered more often.

Ancient statue of goddess is uncovered

A statue of Athena, the Greek goddess of war and wisdom, was recently discovered in Turkey during an excavation and restoration project. The white marble sculpture was found in the ancient city of Laodicea and is estimated to be about 2,000 years old.

The statue, which was found lying face down in rubble, was unearthed along the exterior wall of the West Theater. This important archaeological site in southwestern Turkey dates back to the second century BCE. The sculpture stands about 6 feet tall and is missing its head and parts of its arms.

BORN A WARRIOR
In Greek mythology, Athena was the daughter of Zeus and sprang from his forehead in a full suit of armor.

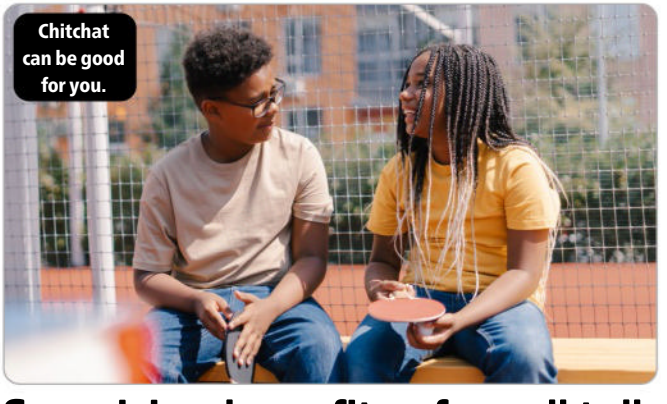
Athena is portrayed wearing a peplos (a type of ancient garment worn in Greece) and a cloak. Her clothing is carved to look natural, as if it is folded and flowing. She also wears a special accessory called an aegis (a breastplate typically made of leather) engraved with the head of Medusa (a character in Greek mythology) and several snakes.

The statue would likely have been placed between columns in a gallery of gods, and its back was left rough and undecorated, since it was not meant to be seen.

Laodicea's main industry was weaving, and Athena, who is also the goddess of weaving, could have held a special significance to the people of the city.

Based on the artistic style of the sculpture, experts think it was created during the reign of the first Roman emperor Augustus, which lasted from about 27 BCE to 14 CE.

The statue of Athena


Chitchat can be good for you.

Surprising benefits of small talk

A new study found that "small talk" (conversations about seemingly unimportant topics) can be enjoyable and boost well-being.

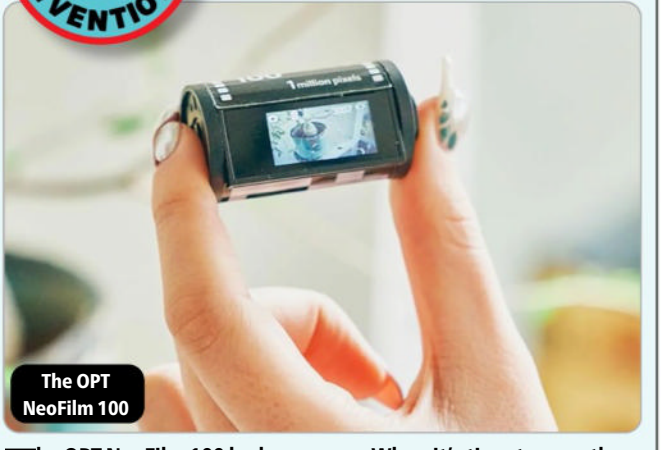
Researchers at the University of Michigan asked 1,800 people to choose topics, including ones they considered dull, and predict how interesting it would be to chat about them. They chose topics including cats, onions, and Pokémon.

Many participants thought they would find it more interesting to talk to someone they knew. But after in-person and online chats with strangers and friends, most said the talks were better than expected. The team said connecting with someone matters more than the topic and that small talk can build relationships.

Elizabeth Trinh, who led the study, said, "Feeling heard, responding to each other, and discovering unexpected details about someone's life can make even a mundane topic meaningful."

AMAZING INVENTION

A "film" roll that's a camera


The OPT NeoFilm 100

The OPT NeoFilm 100 looks like an old-fashioned roll of 35 millimeter film, but it's a functional camera that shoots real photos and videos. The retro gadget has a flash, shutter button, and color display, letting users frame their shots and pick a vintage-style filter.

When it's time to save the images, they can easily be transferred onto a memory card. The OPT NeoFilm 100 is small and lightweight enough to fit in a pocket or on a keychain, and it will last for about an hour before needing to be recharged.

AA PHOTO; GETTY IMAGES; OPT 100/SINCERE STORE; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

The Montreal Victoire with the Walter Cup

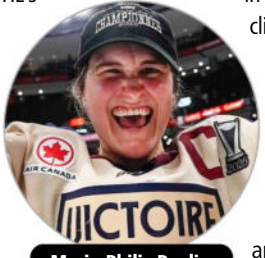
MAKING HISTORY
US hockey star Hayley Scamurra has become the first PWHL player to ever win Olympic gold and a Walter Cup in the same season.

New champions in the PWHL

During the first two seasons of the PWHL (Professional Women's Hockey League), the Minnesota Frost, who were originally known as PWHL Minnesota, were the league's champions. Recently, the third season ended with a new team earning the PWHL's prized trophy, the Walter Cup. On May 20, the Montreal Victoire defeated the Ottawa Charge with a 4–0 win in Game 4 of their best-of-five series to become the PWHL's first Canadian champions.

The Victoire ended the regular season in first place and were the top-seeded (ranked) team in the playoffs. As a result, they were able to pick their opponent in the semifinal, which was the first round. They chose the third-seeded Frost and won the series, 3–2. In the other semifinal series, the fourth-seeded Charge beat the second-seeded Boston Fleet, 3–1, to make the finals for the second year in a row.

During the regular season, the Victoire beat the Charge in three out of their four games. However, the Charge were tough opponents in the finals. Montreal hosted the first two games, and although they won both, each game went to overtime. For Games 3 and 4, the action moved to Ottawa, where the Charge had been undefeated during the semifinals. They had to beat the Victoire to keep the series going, and they did it with an exciting 2–1 win. The game was scoreless for the first two periods, then Montreal took a 1–0 lead in the third. The Charge tied it up about seven minutes later, and with less than a minute to go, Rebecca Leslie delivered what would be the winning goal.



Marie-Philip Poulin

In the Victoire's championship-clinching Game 4 win, the Charge had 23 shots on goal, but Victoire goalie Ann-Renée Desbiens stopped them all. Her teammate Abby Roque scored twice in the game and ended this season's playoffs with more goals and points (goals and assists) than anyone else.

Victoire captain Marie-Philip Poulin was named the playoff MVP (Most Valuable Player). During the postseason, she had four goals—including two game winners—and four assists, tying a PWHL record for playoff points in a season. As a member of Team Canada, Poulin has won golds at the Olympics and the hockey World Championships. By winning the Walter Cup as well, she is now part of the Triple Gold Club, along with four other Victoire players.

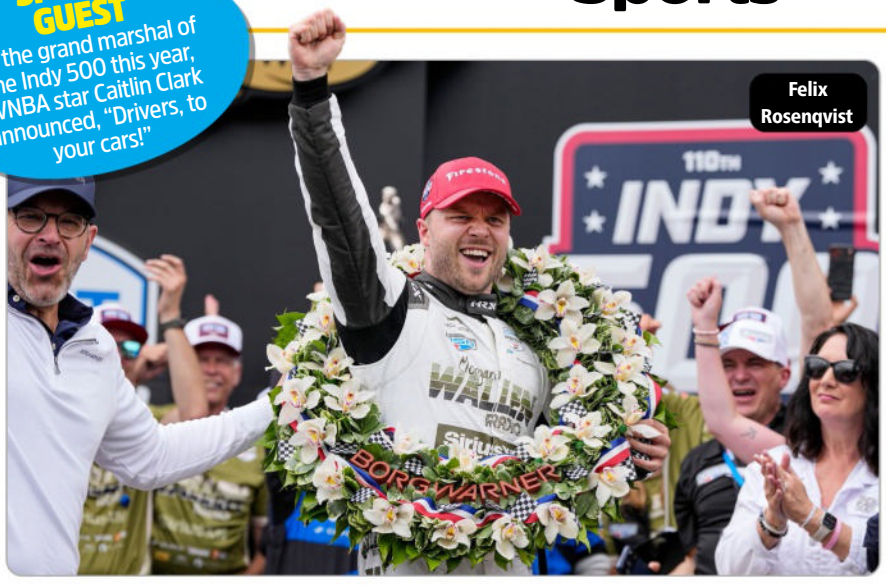
More teams joining the league

The PWHL launched in 2024 with six teams, added two more this season, and will be growing again for the upcoming 2026–27 season. The league has announced that it is expanding to include four new teams based in San Jose, California; Detroit, Michigan; Las Vegas, Nevada; and the Canadian city of Hamilton, Ontario.

The Detroit team will be overseen by hockey trailblazer and former goalie Manon Rheaume. She was a star for Team Canada and played in NHL (National Hockey League) preseason games in 1992 and 1993. She is the first and only woman to ever play in the men's league.

SPECIAL GUEST

As the grand marshal of the Indy 500 this year, WNBA star Caitlin Clark announced, "Drivers, to your cars!"



Felix Rosenqvist

Closest finish ever at Indy 500

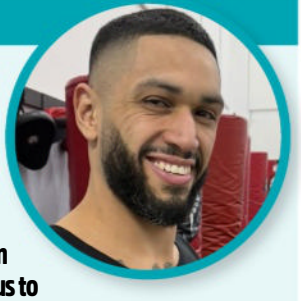
On May 24, drivers competed in the 110th Indianapolis 500, an important race in the IndyCar Series, a top level of American championship car racing. The race, which is also known as the Indy 500, is held at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indiana. It contains 200 laps around a 2.5-mile track, making the entire race approximately 500 miles long.

This year's race ended in dramatic fashion, with Swedish driver Felix Rosenqvist of Meyer Shank Racing w/Curb Agajanian crossing the finish line .0233 seconds ahead of David Malukas of the US. It was the closest finish in Indy 500 history and Rosenqvist's first Indy 500 victory.

Among the 33 drivers at the race were defending champion Alex Palou of Spain and recent two-time winner Josef Newgarden, who is from the US. During the pre-race qualifying process, Palou earned the pole position, the best spot at the start. Malukas started in the third spot on the grid, and Rosenqvist was in the fourth.

The race was filled with excitement and included a record 70 lead changes, with Malukas taking the lead several times over the final 60 laps. Two restarts were required during the last eight laps due to crashes. After the first restart, with five laps to go, Marcus Armstrong of New Zealand surged into the lead. The race was stopped with one lap to go, and when it resumed, Malukas got out in front, trailed closely by Armstrong and Rosenqvist. As they neared the finish, Rosenqvist pulled out from behind Malukas. He was half a car length ahead as the pair crossed the race's famous brick finish line.

COACH OF THE WEEK



Instructor's Name: **Juan Vides**

Team: **Tiger Schulmann's Martial Arts**

"My instructor, called Joshu, makes me stronger and more confident, not only in my fighting but also in myself. He helps me learn new skills and techniques and goes over them until we understand them and get them right. He also helps us to be more disciplined when we are fighting and in school. I've never had any coach who is this motivating and kind. He helps me be better at kickboxing and jiujitsu and makes me the best fighter I can be." Lucie, 11, New York

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

MORE BIG MOMENTS

Arsenal FC

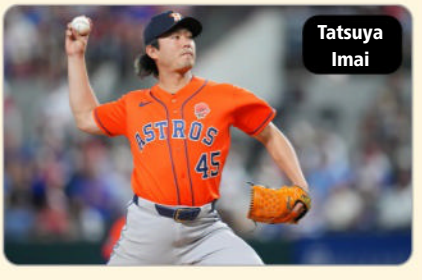
CLUB SOCCER

Arsenal Football Club clinched the English Premier League title on May 19 after Manchester City drew, 1–1, with Bournemouth. This is the club's first Premier League title since 2004. The day before, Arsenal beat Burnley, 1–0. Kai Havertz scored the winning goal with a header off a corner kick from Bukayo Saka.

Northwestern players

COLLEGE LACROSSE

On May 24, Northwestern University beat the University of North Carolina (UNC), 14–11, to win the NCAA Division I women's lacrosse championship. Freshman Gabriella McCollester scored four of Northwestern's goals. It was a rematch of the 2025 final, which UNC won.

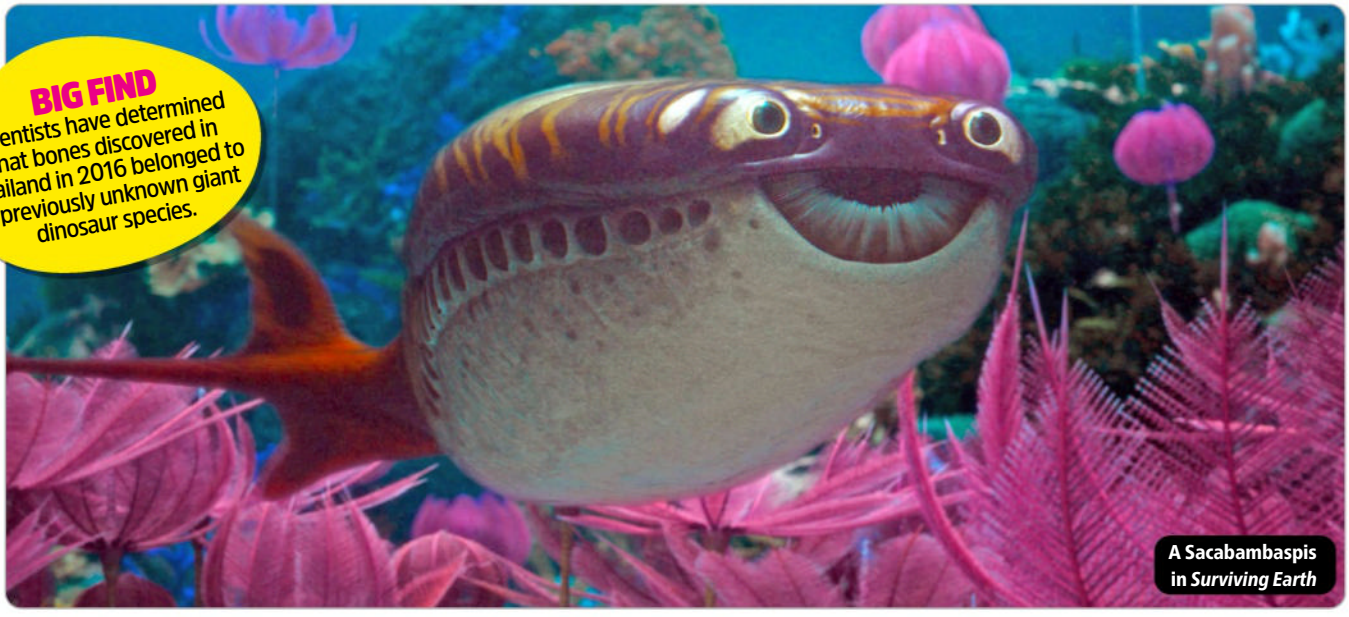


Tatsuya Imai

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

In a 9–0 win over the Texas Rangers on May 25, Houston Astros pitchers Tatsuya Imai, Steven Okert, and Alimber Santa combined for a no-hitter, the first in Major League Baseball (MLB) since 2024. Imai started and threw for six innings, Okert came in for the seventh, and Santa threw for the last two in his MLB debut.

GETTY IMAGES; RYAN KUTTLER/NORTHWESTERN ATHLETICS; AP (2); ON LEFT PAGE: AP (2); PWHL



BIG FIND
Scientists have determined that bones discovered in Thailand in 2016 belonged to a previously unknown giant dinosaur species.

A Sacabambaspis in *Surviving Earth*

TV series about prehistoric life

***Surviving Earth* will bring the planet's most dramatic tales of survival to TV.**

An upcoming documentary series will take viewers back in time to see what prehistoric life was like on Earth. Over eight episodes, *Surviving Earth* will explore how creatures survived and adapted after some of the planet's biggest disasters. The series will make its premiere on June 11 on NBC at 8 p.m. ET and begin streaming the next day on Peacock.

Surviving Earth was created by executive producer and creative director Tim Haines, who oversaw the groundbreaking BBC series *Walking with Dinosaurs* in 1999. Because of today's growing concerns about climate change and its effects, he thought a documentary about the planet's past would be a good idea. "This show is about how incredibly tough life is—and how it has survived some truly awful volcanic ages and come back and thrived," he told *The Week Junior*.

An Ischigualastia hatchling

The show was created with the same type of visual-effects technology used for sci-fi shows like *The Mandalorian*. It involved combining studio sets with computer-generated imagery (CGI) to re-create prehistoric landscapes. The episodes focus on different extinction events and the environmental changes connected to them. Haines said there have been more than 20 mass extinctions throughout Earth's history, but the series focuses on eight. Subjects include shifting climates, falling sea levels, and harmful levels of carbon dioxide in the air.

Each episode tells survival stories and highlights specific creatures. One featured animal is Sacabambaspis (pictured above), an armored jawless fish that lived about 470 million years ago. The show follows how the fish populations struggled as coral reef ecosystems changed but then later returned and flourished again. Another creature in the series is Nanuqsaurus, a smaller relative of Tyrannosaurus rex that lived in polar regions. Every animal depicted was designed by paleoartists—specialists who create realistic depictions of extinct creatures—and reviewed by paleontologists and other scientists to help ensure scientific accuracy.

Haines said the series' outlook on the planet is "encouraging," and he hopes viewers come away feeling optimistic about the future. "The key thing is not to think that life is vulnerable," he said. "Life is extremely strong."

A touring exhibition with fossils

Six Extinctions, a new exhibition about dinosaurs, will open at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Connecticut, on June 6. It has fossil skeletons and skull casts, models, murals, and immersive scenes. It will remain at The Bruce through September 6, then tour North America.

The main attractions in the exhibition are a Tyrannosaurus (above) and a Torosaurus. Both types of dinosaurs went extinct approximately 66 million years ago. Daniel Ksepka, who put together the Bruce's exhibition, told the *Greenwich Sentinel* that *Six Extinctions* "will open visitors' eyes to many other remarkable species that vanished."

Another part of the exhibition is the short film *How to Save Our Planet*, which is narrated by world-famous conservationist and filmmaker David Attenborough.

AMAZING! The world's oldest sports trophy is considered to be the Carlisle Bells, first awarded in 1599 for horse racing in England.

Trophies in the exhibit

Major sports prizes on display

A new exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City highlights the cultural impact and craftsmanship of athletic prizes. *For the Win: Objects of Sports Excellence* features more than 70 important trophies, medals, and rings dating back nearly 150 years. They will be on display through early 2027.

The objects in *For the Win* are on loan from athletes, teams, and sports leagues from around the world. More than 15 sports are represented, including soccer, football, and swimming. The exhibit was put together by Vikki Tobak, who told *The Week Junior* that it brings fans closer to trophies and other items "that most people just see on TV."

The Babe Ruth Crown

Some of the prizes at the museum include championship trophies from Major League Soccer (above left), Major League Baseball (above center), and the National Women's Soccer League (above right). There are also championship rings belonging to NBA (National Basketball Association), WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association), and NFL (National Football League) stars, as well as a gold medal won by US track-and-field legend Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympic Games.

Less traditional objects include the Babe Ruth Crown (inset) that was given to New York Yankees catcher Yogi Berra in 1975 for his lifetime batting achievements, and a pearl necklace that Joc Pederson of the Atlanta Braves famously wore when his team played in the 2021 World Series.

In addition to learning about the athletes who earned the objects, visitors will also be able to find out about the materials, designs, and symbolism that make the pieces extra special.

READER RECOMMENDS

Bluey *(Disney+ or other major platforms)*

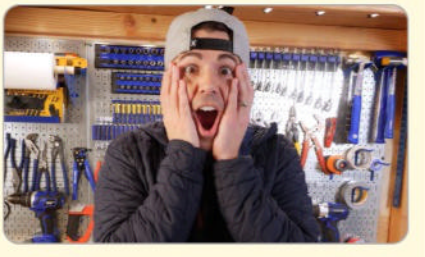
"This is my all-time favorite show! It is super touching and adventurous. You might be thinking, 'What? Bluey is a show for toddlers.' Well, that's not true—it's for all ages. The show's creator said he made it so families could relate to Bluey's family. They're a family of talking Heelers (Australian cattle dogs). Bluey is a bright, imaginative 6-year-old, who has a playful younger sister, Bingo. Episodes feature situations like messy playtime and getting ready to leave the house. Bluey's parents, Chilli and Bandit, always sneak in a life lesson. I highly suggest you go check out this show!" Hailey, 13, Michigan

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 MORE PICKS TO ENJOY THIS WEEK

PLAY: CADENCE: MUSICAL PLAYGROUNDS

This mobile game mixes logic-based puzzles and music. In the challenges, you must create connections, which form musical pathways. For more fun, you can also experiment with drum machines, synths, and effects to make original compositions. (Apple App Store)



WATCH: MARK ROBER'S CRUNCHLABS

Former NASA engineer and YouTuber Mark Rober is known for large-scale experiments and STEM challenges. This series features re-edited versions of his popular YouTube videos, where he does wild tests and debunks science myths. The show's fourth season was recently released. (Netflix)

LISTEN: HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS

Last fall, Audible began releasing a new *Harry Potter* audiobook series, which brings the classic story to life in a new way for listeners. Instead of a narrator reading the books, they are acted out by a large cast of performers. The final installment in the series is now available. (Audible)

ALVARO KEDING & DANIEL KIM/AMNH (4); BBC; MADE WITH MONSTER LOVE; NETFLIX; AUDIBLE; ON LEFT PAGE: NBC (2); GONDWANA STUDIOS

2026 Summer of Reading

LITERARY LEGACY
The Once Upon a Time Bookstore in Montrose, California, opened in 1966 and is the oldest continually operating children's bookstore in the US.

Host a book trivia night

Have fun connecting with friends and family over your shared love of reading.

A book trivia night is a fun competition in which participants see how many questions they can answer about books, authors, characters, and plots. It's also a great way to find out about new books you may want to read! Here's how you can plan a book trivia night with your family or friends.

Set a theme

If you'd like, you can select a theme for your book trivia night. For example, the theme could be "legendary series," "fantasy favorites," or "historical fiction." If you and your friends love a particular popular series, such as *Harry Potter* or *The Baby-Sitters Club*, you could also build a trivia night around those books. (For more book suggestions, turn to "The 50 Books Kids Love Most" on page 12.)

Get the trivia supplies ready!

Come up with the questions

Ask your guests to think of five trivia questions to write down on paper, sticky notes, or index cards. They should include the answers, but be sure no one else can see them! They can be about characters, the plot (avoid spoilers!), authors, or memorable lines. For example, a question could be, Which book has this sentence as its first line: "Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy." (The answer: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.) For more question inspiration, see the box at right.

Prepare to host

Choose a comfortable spot for everyone to gather, with chairs and throw pillows for guests to sit on. Put out pens and paper. Hang up drawings of famous book characters if you like, and arrange some snacks, such as bowls of gummy worms for your "bookworm" guests, on a table.

Run the game

Now it's time to play! You can play individually or set up small teams of two or three players with fun names like the Page Turners or the Mystery Solvers. Have everyone take turns reading the questions they brought, and give players a minute to write down their answer. Then everyone can reveal their answers together. The goal is to correctly answer as many trivia questions as possible. Ask a volunteer to keep score to determine a winner! If you like, you could also end your trivia night with a used book swap (see opposite page).

Sample questions

Here are a few ideas to kick off a book trivia night! How many of these would you get right?

- **Which Hogwarts house is Harry assigned to in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*?**
  Answer: Gryffindor
- **Which book is about a robot who becomes shipwrecked on a remote island?**
  Answer: *The Wild Robot*
- **Which popular children's book author drew a comic strip for his college newspaper?**
  Answer: Jeff Kinney
- **Whose life does Charlotte save in *Charlotte's Web*?**
  Answer: Her friend Wilbur's

WOW! Frank Divendal of the Netherlands broke the world record for largest collection of bookmarks, with 103,009.

Create colorful character bookmarks

What you'll need

- Cardstock (metallic silver, colored, or both)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- White glue or tape
- Markers
- Pipe cleaners
- Dot stickers or hole punches

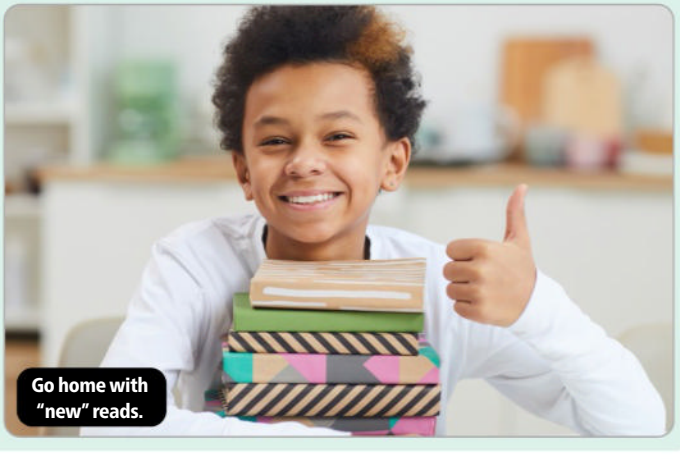
Instructions

1. **Robot:** Cut a narrow rectangle of metallic paper for the body and a small rectangle of colored paper for the head. Tape a pipe cleaner to back of body. Tape head over it. Draw a face with marker. To make an antenna, roll the end of another pipe cleaner into a small ball, then cut it 1 inch below the ball. Tape it to back of head. Add dot stickers or draw "lights" on the body.
2. **Alien:** Cut a thin rectangle for the body. Draw eyes or adhere dot stickers. Tape pipe cleaner antennae to the back of the head. Cut a tongue and glue only the top part of it to the body (so it becomes a flap).
3. **Cat and rabbit:** Cut a narrow rectangle and draw an animal shape on it, including the ears and legs. Cut out the shape. Draw the face and claws. Glue on cut paper shapes for the inner ears or draw them with a marker.

Tip: If you like, glue an extra piece of cardstock to the back of your finished bookmark. This will hide glued-on pieces like pipe cleaners and keep it looking neat.

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK: HOLD A USED BOOK SWAP

A book swap is a great way to exchange books and find new stories to read. You'll also be helping the planet by trading books with others instead of discarding them. With an adult, choose a date, time, and place (such as your home, a park, or a community space) for your swap. Make a guest list and send out invitations asking everyone to bring up to five books they're willing to give away. Set up a spot for guests to "check in" the books as they arrive. Give each guest a ticket or token for each book they bring. They can use these later to select "new" books of their choosing. Once everyone has arrived, you can start swapping!



Go home with "new" reads.

JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKEIT; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

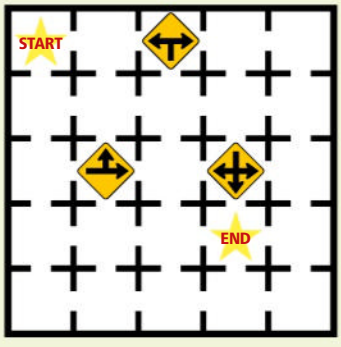
Word ladder

To change the word BOOK into the word FAIR, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.

	B O O K
Stole ▶	
Hammer or pliers, for example ▶	
Fee paid for using a highway or crossing a bridge ▶	
Like skyscrapers ▶	
Notable part of a peacock or squirrel ▶	
Ice pellets on a stormy day ▶	
Barber's concern ▶	
	F A I R

DETOURS

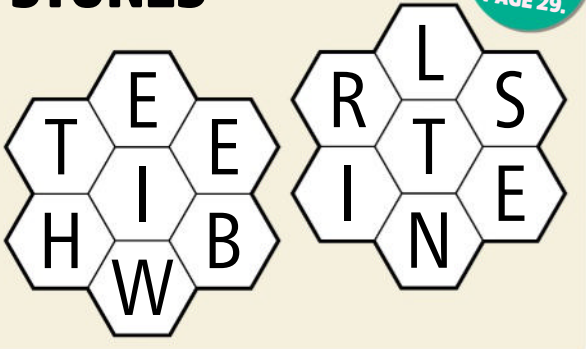
Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every single square without crossing itself. For squares with signs, you may only enter at the arrow's base, and you may only make a turn in the direction of an arrow shown. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)



STEPPING STONES

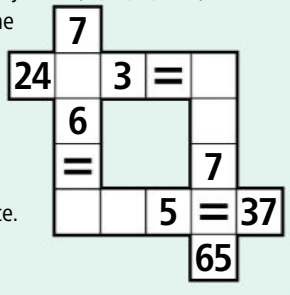
ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Each figure hides the initials and five-letter last name of a famous author who uses two initials in their name, like C.S. Lewis. To find each one, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once.



Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, −, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once.

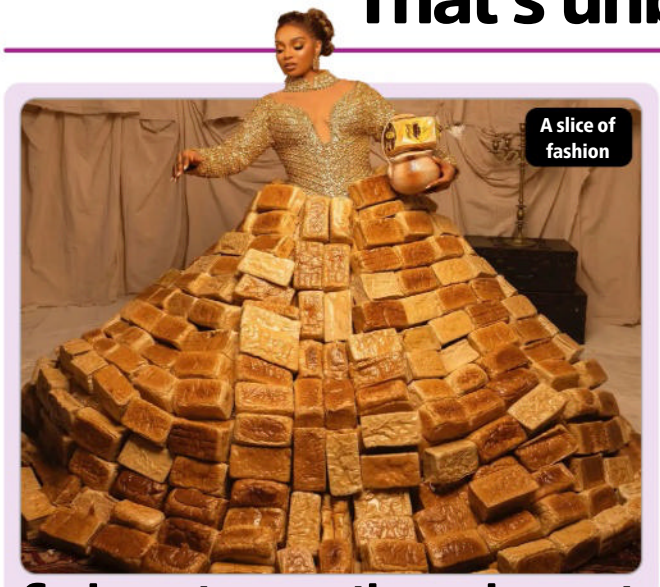


Spot the difference

These two pictures of students in a library appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Detours hint: Start by moving to the right.


A slice of fashion

Carb couture on the red carpet

Creativity was on display at the 12th annual Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards in Nigeria, known as Africa's biggest night in film and fashion. But one look really took the cake—or loaf. Reality TV star Queen Mercy Atang walked the red carpet in a dress made of more than 500 loaves of bread. Designed by Toyin Lawan, the dress had shock value, but Atang said her main reason for wearing the yeasty outfit was to promote her bakery business. While some online commenters expressed concern about the food going to waste, others applauded Atang as a "bread winner."

A barking good time

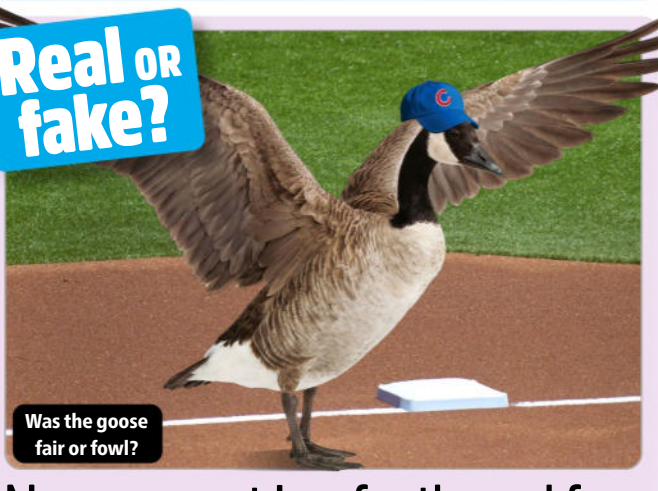
Paws-itively cool at the pool

Splish, splash, hundreds of dogs took a bath. At a Florida park, 277 dogs played in kiddie-sized pools at the same time to achieve a world record for the largest dog pool party. The event, sponsored by pet retailer Chewy, highlighted the importance of keeping pets cool during the summer. Pups were also treated to games, treat tastings, new toy releases, and frozen "pupsicles." After the day of "tail-wagging fun," the company said it would donate the pools and toys to local animal shelters.

Looking sharp!

A pencil with a political point

A 6-foot-tall pencil with glasses is running for governor in Oregon with one goal in mind: drawing attention to kids' education in the state. Oregon fourth graders recently ranked last in the country for reading, and J. Schuberth wants to change that. He has begun walking around in a homemade costume and talking to voters, asking them to write the name "Pencil" on their ballots on election day. With a crowded field of candidates, Pencil knows he is unlikely to reach the governor's mansion. Still, by launching this campaign, he hopes to make his mark.



Was the goose fair or fowl?

New mascot is a feathered fan

A Major League Baseball team is using a live goose as an official mascot. The Chicago Cubs' traditional mascot is a person dressed as a bear cub named Clark, but the team's owners wanted to give him a partner to pump up the crowd. They decided to use a real animal instead of a costumed human and chose a Canada goose, commonly seen in Chicago. The bird, who is trained to be calm around people and waddle across the field before games, has been a huge hit with fans. Is this story real, or is it a gaggle of lies?*

*Fake! The Cubs don't have a goose mascot, but a Canada goose did fly onto the field during a recent game. It landed in left field and flew away only when a ball landed nearby. Last year, another goose was found nesting in the stands.

@SEGUN_WEALTH; CHEWY; ELI IMADALI/OPB; ADOBE STOCK; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Editor's note

Welcome to our blockbuster Summer of Reading issue! The goal of this program is to inspire you to dive into books that keep you reading all summer long, and the highlight is our list of 50 book recommendations from YOU, our readers (p12–17). We believe children are the best book critics, and we also know kids love suggestions from other kids their age. So we hope you'll find lots of intriguing ideas on the list. I'd like to offer a special thanks to our Author Ambassadors—Kwame Alexander, Tiffany D. Jackson, Erin Entrada Kelly, Jeff Kinney, and Brandon Mull—for being part of this exciting campaign. You can find out about their new books on page 15. We have other Summer of Reading content throughout the issue, too—just look for the sun logo. And be sure to enter our Summer of Reading sweepstakes with the form on page 17. Happy summer, and happy reading!

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

Reading Is Fundamental

The goal of this organization is to ensure that all children in the US have access to books. Since 1966 it has worked to foster a love of reading in children, with a special emphasis on distributing books to underserved communities. The organization has reached about 237 million children in the US and distributed about 450 million books. Find out more at rif.org.

60 years Reading Is Fundamental

Sharing books with neighbors

Skyler, 12, California

"Thanks to the amazing contributions from neighbors, our Free Little Library has grown so much! It's been incredible to see books of every genre come and go. My favorite part is watching kids stop by on their daily walks, knowing that our little library will be part of their childhood memories. As a young author of five books myself, it's especially exciting to see readers discover new stories, just like I hope they'll discover mine one day! Sharing stories is one of the best ways I know to build community."

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

What's seen only once in June and never in May or July?

The letter "e"

Help us celebrate America's 250th!

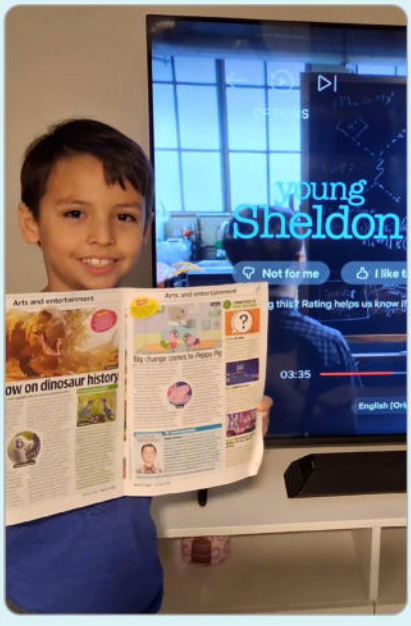
At *The Week Junior*, we're gearing up to mark the 250th anniversary of America. We're inviting our readers to celebrate with us! To highlight the many places and people that make up the fabric of our nation, please send us a photo of yourself taken in front of a special spot in your hometown, such as a school, park, statue, or memorial. Ask an adult to email your photo to *hello@theweekjunior.com* with a description of where your photo was taken and My Hometown in the subject line. We'll feature some of the submissions on this page later this year.

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.



"I enjoyed reading this and seeing *Young Sheldon* in the magazine." Andy, 8, Florida

"We brought *The Week Junior* with us to Utah because it is the best magazine that I read over and over again!" Chloe, 10, California

"We made the broccoli cheddar grilled cheese from *The Week Junior* using sourdough bread. It was very good and we ate every bite!" Adeline, 9, and Grant, 7, Pennsylvania

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mr. Walters**

School: **Audubon Park School**

"Mr. Walters is the best teacher. He teaches kindergarten through fifth grade music and also leads after-school clubs for chorus, percussion, and rhythm. He has a smile for everyone, and he treats us like real musicians. Mr. Walters' clubs work together to put on concerts during the year, and our parents are always amazed by our shows. Everybody loves Mr. Walters."

Theodore, 10, Florida

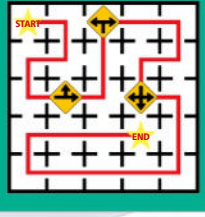
Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

Word ladder
B O O K
T O O K
T O O L
T O L L
T A L L
T A I L
H A I L
H A I R
F A I R

Stepping stones
E.B. White,
R.L. Stine



		7		
24	×	3	=	72
6				−
=				7
42	−	5	=	37
		65		

Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** a) Bougie **2** b) Athena **3** True **4** The American Museum of Natural History **5** c) Fantasy **6** True **7** b) Colorado **8** Tony Awards **9** True **10** c) Marie-Philip Poulin **11** Eight **12** b) 2004 **13** False. It found that it is good for people's well-being. **14** The *Mona Lisa* **15** c) Pencil

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 Which word has been misspelled the most this year, according to Unscramblerer.com?

a) Bougie b) Favorite c) Through

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 A statue of which ancient Greek goddess was recently uncovered in Turkey?

a) Aphrodite b) Athena c) Artemis

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

3 True or false? April 2026 was the first-ever month in which more electricity was generated globally from wind and solar power than gas.

True ☐ False ☐

4 *For the Win: Objects of Sports Excellence* is a new exhibit at what New York City museum?

5 Which book genre did kids like best in our Summer of Reading survey?

a) Nonfiction b) Mystery c) Fantasy

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? *The Late Show* first aired in 1993.

True ☐ False ☐

7 The new Anythink Nature Library will open in which US state?

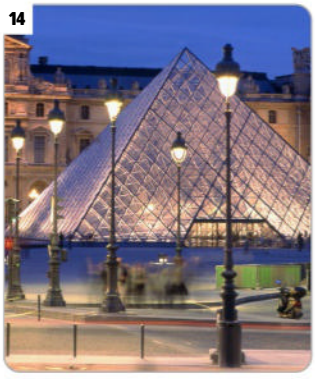
a) Arizona b) Colorado

c) Washington

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 Musical artist Pink is set to host what awards show on June 7?

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.



9 True or false? Bruce the kea parrot uses his lower beak like a lance to win fights.

True ☐ False ☐

10 Who was named the Most Valuable Player of the Professional Women's Hockey League playoffs?

a) Abby Roque

b) Ann-Renée Desbiens

c) Marie-Philip Poulin

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

11 The new documentary series *Surviving Earth* focuses on how many mass extinction events?

12 Arsenal Football Club recently won the English Premier League title for the first time since what year?

a) 1994 b) 2004 c) 2014

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 True or false? A recent study found that small talk is bad for people's well-being.

True ☐ False ☐

14 What famous painting is getting its own separate exhibition space in a planned expansion of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France?

15 J. Schuberth is running for governor in Oregon as what classroom object?

a) Chalk

b) Marker

c) Pencil

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

THE WEEK Junior

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The Week Junior (ISSN 2689-9027) is published weekly, except January 2, January 9, July 10, and September 11. *The Week Junior* is published by Future US LLC, 130 West 42nd Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTERS: Send change of address to *The Week Junior,* PO Box 37595, Boone, IA 50037-7595.

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A NEW BOOK JUST FOR KIDS!

From the Editors of

THE WEEK Junior

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What's Inside?

This isn't just a history book—it's a road map of the American spirit. This **100-page full-color book** is packed with fascinating facts, deep insights, and kid-friendly knowledge. Young readers will explore:

- **The Visionaries:** Meet the people whose words and actions changed the course of history.
- **The Milestones:** Discover how the nation began, how it has evolved, and the "big ideas" that guide us.
- **The Majesty:** Journey through the iconic places, events, and traditions that bring us together.
- **The Promise:** Take a look forward at what America aspires to be.

USA250

THE WEEK Junior

READ ALL ABOUT IT

The Tianjin Binhai library in Tianjin, China, is known as "The Eye" and features a futuristic, spherical central hall with wavy, book-covered walls.

GETTY IMAGES